

Transborder and Other International Transportation Statistics

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Nondomestic transportation in North America is either (1) transborder trade and transport among the three countries or (2) international transportation beyond North American borders. Both transborder and international transport involve the movement of either freight or passengers.

Of the three countries, Canada's economy is by far the more internationalized. In monetary terms, the Canadian foreign trade sector equals about 42 percent of that country's gross domestic product. The Mexican relationship for export and import trade combined is approximately 25 percent of GDP; the U.S. figure is the lowest at about 16 percent. (See table 10.)

Expenditures on international passenger travel were less important by far in all three countries than were import and export expenditures for goods. Money spent by travelers to and from the three countries was equivalent to about 7 percent of the Mexican GDP, about 3 percent of the Canadian, and under 1½ percent of the U.S.

Transborder Passengers

Along the Canadian-U.S. and U.S.-Mexican borders, same-day travel both by car and on foot dominates the number of border crossings.¹ For example, more than half of the Canadian-U.S. border crossings are estimated to be same-day round-trips by car. These short-term crossings by motor vehicle, bicycle, boat, transit, or on foot—while significant—are not included in the data tabulations compiled by national authorities, and are not addressed here.

Longer term border crossings and other international passenger trips for all three countries totaled almost 96 million in 1990. (See table 11.) The majority (about 53 million, or approximately 55 percent) of these trips were transborder—i.e., North American trips made by residents of the three countries. A remaining 43 million trips to and from Canada, Mexico, and

Table 10 Foreign Travel and Trade Exports and Imports as a Percentage of GDP

	Exports (as a percentage of GDP)			Imports (as a percentage of GDP)		
	Travel	Trade	Total	Travel	Trade	Total
Canada	2.16	21.60	23.76	1.04	20.32	21.36
Mexico	3.54	11.37	14.91	3.18	13.25	16.43
United States	0.70	7.14	7.84	0.74	8.98	9.72

Table 11 Transborder and International Passenger Trips: 1990

	To: Canada	Mexico	U.S.	Rest of World	Subtotals	Per 1,000 Capita
From:						
Canada	—	783,804◀	17,262,000	2,472,587	20,518,391	771
Mexico	600,000◀	—	6,768,000	4,751,786◀	12,119,786◀	149◀
United States	12,668,000	14,900,000	—	15,990,000	43,558,000	174
Rest of World	3,256,391◀	1,329,143◀	15,059,000	—	19,644,534◀	n/a
Subtotal	16,524,391	17,012,947◀	39,089,000	23,214,373◀	—	n/a
Per 1,000 Population	621	209◀	156	n/a	n/a	—

Data are for trips longer than one day.

◀ Denotes estimate

n/a Not available for this report.

On a per capita basis, the typical traveler from Canada outspends people traveling from the United States or Mexico more than three times over, spending \$467 per trip compared with \$155 and \$101, respectively. (See table 12.) Travelers from other countries in Canada for longer than a day spent more on the average (\$224) than travelers in the United States (\$162) or in Mexico (\$90). For Canada and Mexico, average expenditures per capita are greater for their residents traveling abroad than for foreign nationals traveling in their countries. The difference between these expenditures was quite large for Canada: travelers to Canada averaged less than half the amount spent by travelers from Canada (\$224 versus \$467 per capita). For the United States, per capita spending was just about even, with residents spending \$155 abroad and travelers to the United States spending \$162 per trip.

Freight Transport

Data are available on transborder and international freight movements in terms of (1) the weights moved and (2) the value of shipments, per unit of weight and per capita for each North American country. Data are also available on dollars spent on freight transport by air, water, and land from 1989 to 1992.

Very little freight is shipped between Canada and Mexico. (See table 13.) The United States ships approximately equal weights of commodities to both Mexico and Canada, and receives relatively equal amounts of freight from each country as well. The volume of U.S. imports from both Canada and Mexico, however, is about double the amount of the U.S. exports to either.

These relative relationships might be expected from freight flows that consist primarily of raw materials to the United States and of processed or manufactured goods from the United States to its neighbors. This assumption is supported by the fact that shipments to Mexico from Canada

Table 13 Transborder and International Freight Movements: 1990

U.S. Tons, Million						
	To: Canada	Mexico	U.S.	Rest of World	Subtotals	Per 1,000 Capita
From:						
Canada	—	1◄	98	127	226◄	8.489
Mexico ¹	4◄	—	89	88	182◄	2.238
United States	52	45	—	364	408	1.631
Rest of World	44	40	390	—	815	n/a
Subtotal	101◄	87◄	577	580	—	n/a
Per Capita Tons	3.795	1.068	2.309	n/a	n/a	—
Metric Tonnes, Million						
	To: Canada	Mexico	U.S.	Rest of World	Subtotals	Per 1,000 Capita
From:						
Canada	—	1◄	89	115	205◄	7.703
Mexico ¹	4◄	—	81	80	165◄	2.031
United States	47	41	—	331	370	1.480
Rest of World	40	37	354	—	740	n/a
Subtotal	92◄	79◄	524	526	—	n/a
Per Capita Tonnes	3.444	0.969	2.095	n/a	n/a	—

Notes

◄ Denotes estimate

n/a Not available for this report

1. U.S.-Mexican figures are for 1991.

and the United States are of a higher value than are the shipments those countries receive from Mexico. (See table 14.) Furthermore, shipments from the United States to Canada are of a higher value by weight than those received from Canada.

Although Canada and Mexico are important trading partners for the United States, the weight of their combined commodity shipments to the United States is only about one-third that of all U.S. freight imports. Shipments to both these countries from the United States accounts for about a quarter of U.S. exports worldwide.

International freight movements per capita are far greater for Canada than for either Mexico or the United States. Canada's 1990 per capita freight weight was about eight tonnes (over eight tons), compared to about two tonnes (slightly over two tons) for Mexico and around one and a half tonnes (over one and a half tons) for the United States. From a dollar standpoint, Canada's per capita exports are three times the value of those of the United States—\$4,673 in 1990 versus \$1,575—and about 15 times the value of Mexico's per capita exports (\$330). (See table 15.) Canada was a net exporter in 1990 by a small margin, importing \$4,389 per capita. The other two North American countries were net importers, with negative trade balances.

Modal Trends in Freight Transport

Land transport, particularly by motor carrier, is the primary means of moving freight between the three North American countries. (See table 16.) Air transport is the second major mode, as measured by shipment value, for shipments from the United States to Canada; water transport is the second major mode for freight moved from Canada to the United States.

Canada-U.S. Freight Movement. Between 1989 and 1992, total United States-to-Canada trade increased more than 3 percent in constant dollars. From 1989 to 1991, the value of goods shipped by water declined by more than half, although there was a small increase from 1991 to 1992. The value moved by truck rose about 9 percent from 1990 to 1992. Rail and "other" transport (which included oil pipeline movement) declined during the same period.

The value of freight moving in the opposite direction—i.e., from Canada to the United States—was approximately the same in 1992 as in 1989. Air movements rose in value 41 percent over the period, accounting for about 5 percent of the total by all modes by 1992. The value of goods carried by water transport rose between 1989 and 1992, accounting for almost 11 percent of the mode's total by 1992. Track and rail transit declined: The rail value in 1992 was only 65 percent of its 1989 value.

Table 14 Transborder and International Freight Value by Weight: 1990

	Value/Ton, U.S. Dollars				
	To: Canada	Mexico	U.S.	Rest of World	Subtotals
From:					
Canada	—	624◄	936	254	550◄
Mexico	338◄	—	213	72	148◄
United States	1,586	624	—	775	965
Rest of World	731	58	987	—	n/a
Subtotal	1,157◄	361◄	858	n/a	—

◄ Denotes estimate

n/a Not available for this report

Table 15

Transborder and International Freight Value: 1990

Millions, U.S. Dollars ¹						
	To: Canada	Mexico	U.S.	Rest of World	Subtotals	Per Capita
From:						
Canada	—	562	91,372	32,362	124,297	4,673
Mexico	1,498	—	18,997	6,343	26,838	330
United States ¹	82,967	28,375	—	282,250	393,592	1,575
Rest of World	32,283	2,335◀	384,942	—	544,727◀	n/a
Subtotals	116,748	31,272	495,311	320,956	—	n/a
Per Capita	4,389	385	1,982	n/a	n/a	—
Millions, Canadian Dollars ²						
	To: Canada	Mexico	U.S.	Rest of World	Subtotals	Per Capita
From:						
Canada	—	656	111,556	37,767	149,979	5,638
Mexico	1,748	—	22,169	7,402	31,320	385
United States ¹	96,822	33,114	—	329,386	459,322	1,838
Rest of World	37,675	2,725◀	449,227	—	489,627◀	n/a
Subtotal	136,245	36,494	582,953	n/a	—	n/a
Per capita	5,122	449	2,333	n/a	n/a	—
Billions, Pesos ³						
	To: Canada	Mexico	U.S.	Rest of World	Subtotals	Per Capita
From:						
Canada	—	1,617	262,832	93,091	357,539	13,441
Mexico	4,309	—	54,645	18,246	77,200	950
United States ¹	238,655	81,621	—	811,892	1,132,167	4,530
Rest of World	92,863	6,716◀	1,107,286	—	1,566,906◀	n/a
Subtotal	335,826	89,954◀	1,424,762	923,229	—	n/a
Per capita (thousands)	12,625	1,107	5,701	n/a	n/a	—

Notes
 ◀ Denotes estimate
 n/a Not available for this report
 1. U.S. export figures include silver ore and bullion.
 2. 1990 exchange rate of 1.167 Canadian dollars per U.S. dollar used.
 3. July 1990 market exchange rate of 2,876.75 pesos per U.S. dollar used.

Mexico-U.S. Freight Movement. In 1989 and 1990, slightly more freight (as measured by freight value) moved from Mexico to the United States than in the opposite direction. This relationship was reversed in 1991 and 1992: U.S.-to-Mexico freight value was \$2 billion greater in 1991, and \$5 billion greater in 1992, than the value of freight transported from Mexico to the United States.

The primary mode of movement in both directions is motor carriage, the second most important mode is air transport for shipments from the United States to Mexico and water transport for shipments from Mexico to the United States. The value of freight bound to Mexico by air is nearly three times the value of freight moved north from Mexico to the United States. On the other hand, the value of freight moved north to the United States by water transport is about three times the value of that moved south from the United States to Mexico.

Canada-Mexico Freight Movement. Data for freight values moved between Canada and Mexico were not available for 1989. Between 1990 and 1992, these freight flows increased. In all cases, however, Canada-to-Mexico flows were worth much less than freight values from Mexico to Canada. A north-south "land bridge" appears to exist between the two countries. In 1992, this bridge accounted for motor carriage of some \$1.4 billion of goods northward and

Table 16

Transborder and International Freight Value by Mode

	1989	1990	1991	1992
U.S. to Canada by Mode, Millions 1990 U.S. Dollars				
Aviation	4,816	6,036	5,637	5,987
Water	3,633	1,938	1,433	1,447
Land	73,210	74,992	74,818	76,975
Highway	n/a	63,712	66,884	69,227
Rail	n/a	8,233	7,564	7,415
Other	n/a	3,047	370	332
Total	n/a	81,660	82,967	81,888
Canada to U.S. by Mode, Millions 1990 U.S. Dollars				
Aviation	1,412	3,315	3,984	4,254
Water	5,540	9,675	10,008	9,750
Rail	24,674	16,914	15,109	16,207
Highway	57,568	53,257	49,905	53,060
Other	2,841	8,211	8,573	8,948
Total	92,035	91,372	87,580	92,219
U.S. to Mexico by Mode, Millions 1990 U.S. Dollars				
Aviation	1,170	1,378	1,484	2,011
Water	1,687	1,527	1,452	1,751
Highway	23,194	25,470	29,067	34,247
Total	26,051	28,375	32,002	38,010
Mexico to U.S. by Mode, Millions 1990 U.S. Dollars				
Aviation	259	572	634	755
Water	4,873	5,764	5,059	4,983
Highway	23,233	23,836	24,245	27,204
Total	28,365	30,172	29,938	32,941
Canada to Mexico by Mode, Millions 1990 U.S. Dollars				
Aviation	n/a	84	50	52
Water	n/a	87	118	194
Highway	n/a	206	210	269
Rail	n/a	133	62	87
Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	n/a	510	440	601
Mexico to Canada by Mode, Millions 1990 U.S. Dollars				
Aviation	n/a	58	58	52
Water	n/a	126	159	67
Highway	n/a	890	1,297	1,390
Rail	n/a	403	579	503
Other	n/a	22	72	135
Total	n/a	1,499	2,165	2,147

n/a Not available for this report

nearly \$300 million of goods southward. The value of rail flows was much smaller, with \$500 million in goods moving north and about \$90 million moving south from Canada to Mexico. Water shipments were valued at approximately \$100 to \$200 million annually in each direction for 1990, 1991, and 1992. Water was second in importance to motor carriage for movements from Canada to Mexico, but third in importance—behind highway and rail—for northbound movement between the two countries.

Endnote

1. Transit is also important in a few instances; San Diego's new light rail line carries much tourist traffic.